

## **Leadership and IT-Driven Organizational Change in the Sri Lankan Context**

T. Suraweera, E. P. E. Rodrigo, H. M. G. L. Samarathunga, K. D. S. S. Wimalaratna,  
G. D. N. Jayasekara and K. M. M. S. Somarathne

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka

This research investigates Information Technology (IT) driven organizational changes in Sri Lankan organizations by focusing on the leadership aspects. The main objective of this research is to identify which leadership styles are effective in ensuring the success of change management processes within IT project implementations. In order to achieve this, firstly the research conducts an in-depth investigation of the relationship between leadership and change management practices within organizations. Encapsulating the findings, a model is proposed to pinpoint the leadership style that should be adopted within the change management process of the organization.

The research involved qualitative methods. Models by Goalman (2000), Kotter (1996), and Cooper and Zmud (1990) were consulted to build an initial framework surrounding leadership and change management practices. Using the Case Study method, in-depth interviews and document reviews were conducted for six leading Sri Lankan organizations which had undergone IT change. Analysis of results revealed that organizations are increasingly realizing the value of employing change management practices when introducing IT change to their organizations. The attention of leaders was found to be more focused on the culture, behaviours and attitudes of employees who are part of the change process than on the steps within the change process itself which are prescribed by change gurus. Eliminating people resistance has been treated with the highest priority based on the argument that effectiveness of change management processes is directly linked to winning over the people resource. Leadership styles were found to be practiced more from a public relations (PR) perspective to win the people over in the short term and thereby ensuring long term success.

Key words: Leadership, Organizational Change, Information Technology, Change Management Process, Leadership Styles, Sri Lankan Context, IT Driven Change